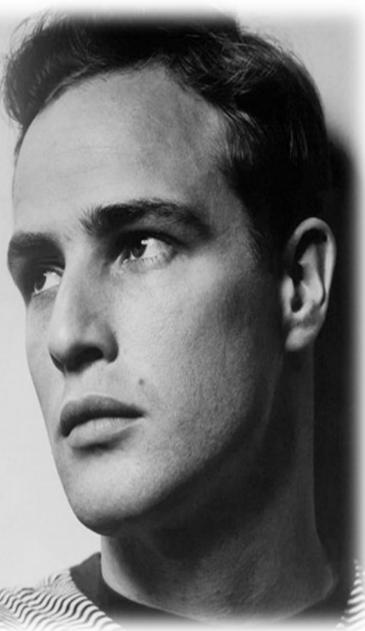


## Greatest Of All Times

Globally selected  
PERSONALITIES

IT'S THE HARDEST  
THING IN THE WORLD  
TO ACCEPT A 'LITTLE'  
SUCCESS AND LEAVE  
IT THAT WAY.

MARLON BRANDO



3 Apr 1924 <:::><:::><:::> 1 Jul 2004

Compiled by:  
Prof Dr S Ramalingam  
ISBN:978-81-982437-8-2

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1 Jul 2004

Actor of the Century

<https://marlonbrando.com/>

A Centennial Tribute

## Marlon Brando

Considered one of the great American screen actors of the 20th century, Marlon Brando (1924–2004) cut his teeth on the Stanislavski system, which he learned from beloved New York-based acting teacher Stella Adler. An admirer of the virtuosic Fredric March and tough guy James Cagney but with a natural approach to character atypical of the stylized screen acting of the period, Brando quickly distinguished himself from his peers. His breakthrough performance as Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), a role he originated on Broadway, led to the first of his eight Academy Award nominations throughout his six-decade career, taking home Oscars for *On the Waterfront* (1954) and *The Godfather* (1972). Brando would venture into directing only once, take calculated risks in international films by lauded auteurs, return to Tennessee Williams, and branch out into musicals, surprising audiences with his unexpected choices.

Remembered today as much for his off-screen activism as for the physicality of his on-screen presence, the many faces and phases of Brando's astonishing career are represented here and in our Oscar® Sundays series this spring in what would have been his centennial year.

(☺)(☺)(☺)(☺)(☺)

# Marlon Brando



[The Men](#) (1950) publicity still

<b>Born</b>	Marlon Brando Jr.
	April 3, 1924
	<a href="#">Omaha, Nebraska</a> , U.S.
<b>Died</b>	July 1, 2004 (aged 80)
	Los Angeles, California
<b>Occupation</b>	Actor
<b>Years active</b>	1944–2004
<b>Works</b>	<a href="#">Full list</a>
<b>Spouses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Anna Kashfi</a> (m. 1957; div. 1959)</li><li>• <a href="#">Movita Castaneda</a> (m. 1960; ann. 1968)</li><li>• <a href="#">Tarita Teriipaia</a> (m. 1962; div. 1972)</li></ul>
<b>Children</b>	11, including <a href="#">Christian</a> and <a href="#">Cheyenne</a>
<b>Relatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Jocelyn Brando</a> (sister)</li><li>• <a href="#">D. A. Pennebaker</a> (cousin)</li></ul>
<b>Awards</b>	<a href="#">Full list</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="#">marlonbrando.com</a>

**Signature**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Brando". The signature is fluid and cursive, with some loops and variations in letter height.

**Marlon Brando Jr.** (April 3, 1924 – July 1, 2004) was an American actor. Widely regarded as one of the greatest cinema actors of the 20th century, Brando received numerous accolades throughout his career, which spanned six decades, including two Academy Awards, three British Academy Film Awards, a Cannes Film Festival Award, two Golden Globe Awards, and a Primetime Emmy Award. Brando is credited with being one of the first actors to bring the Stanislavski system of acting and method acting to mainstream audiences.

Brando came under the influence of [Stella Adler](#) and Stanislavski's system in the 1940s. He began his career on stage, where he was lauded for adeptly interpreting his characters. He made his [Broadway](#) debut in the play [\*I Remember Mama\*](#) (1944) and won [Theater World Awards](#) for his roles in the plays [\*Candida\*](#) and [\*Truckline Cafe\*](#), both in 1946. He returned to Broadway as [\*Stanley Kowalski\*](#) in the [Tennessee Williams](#) play [\*A Streetcar Named Desire\*](#) (1947), a role he reprised in the [1951](#) film adaptation, directed by [\*Elia Kazan\*](#).

He made his film debut playing a wounded G.I. in *The Men* (1950) and won two Academy Awards for Best Actor for his roles as a dockworker in the crime drama film *On the Waterfront* (1954) and Vito Corleone in the gangster epic *The Godfather* (1972). He was Oscar-nominated for playing Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), Emiliano Zapata in *Viva Zapata!* (1952), Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* (1953), an air force pilot in *Sayonara* (1957), an American expatriate in *Last Tango in Paris* (1973), and a lawyer in *A Dry White Season* (1989).

Brando was known for playing characters who later became [popular icons](#), such as the rebellious motorcycle-gang leader Johnny Strabler in *The Wild One* (1953), and he came to be seen as an emblem of the era's so-called "[generation gap](#)". He also played [Sky Masterson](#) in the musical film *Guys and Dolls* (1955), [Fletcher Christian](#) in the action film *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962), [Jor-El](#) in the superhero film *Superman* (1978), and as [Colonel Kurtz](#) in the [Vietnam](#) war drama *Apocalypse Now* (1979). He made his directorial film debut in the western drama *One-Eyed Jacks* (1961), in which he also starred, which did poorly at the box office.

On television, Brando won the [Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Limited Series or Movie](#) for his role in the [ABC](#) miniseries [\*Roots: The Next Generations\*](#) (1979), after which he took a nine-year hiatus from acting. He later returned to film, with varying degrees of commercial and critical success. The last two decades of his life were marked by controversy, and his troubled private life received significant public attention. He struggled with mood disorders and legal issues. His last films include [\*The Island of Dr. Moreau\*](#) (1996) and [\*The Score\*](#) (2001).



# Filmography

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlon\\_Brando\\_filmography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlon_Brando_filmography)

## Filmography



Brando from a trailer for the film Julius Caesar (1953), for which he received his third Oscar nomination.

### Filmography:

Feature films	40
Stage	7
Television series	3
Video games	1
Music videos	1

**Marlon Brando** (1924 – 2004) was an American actor and considered one of the most influential actors of the 20th century.

Having studied with Stella Adler in the 1940s, he is credited with being one of the first actors to bring the Stanislavski system of acting, and method acting, to mainstream audiences. He gained acclaim for his role of Stanley Kowalski in the 1951 film adaptation of Tennessee Williams' play A Streetcar Named Desire, a role that he originated successfully on Broadway. He received further praise, and a first Academy Award and Golden Globe Award, for his performance as Terry Malloy in On the Waterfront, and his portrayal of the rebellious motorcycle gang leader Johnny Strabler in The Wild One proved to be a lasting image in popular culture.<sup>1</sup> Brando received Academy Award nominations for playing Emiliano Zapata in Viva Zapata! (1952); Mark Antony in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's 1953 film adaptation of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar; and Air Force Major Lloyd Gruver in Sayonara (1957), an adaptation of James A. Michener's 1954 novel.

The 1960s saw Brando's career take a commercial and critical downturn. He directed and starred in the cult western One-Eyed Jacks, a critical and commercial flop, after which he delivered a series of notable box-office failures, beginning with Mutiny on the Bounty (1962). After ten years of underachieving, he agreed to do a screen test as Vito Corleone in Francis Ford Coppola's The Godfather (1972). The Godfather became the highest-grossing film ever made, and alongside his Oscar-nominated performance in Last Tango in Paris (1972), Brando reestablished himself in the ranks of top box-office stars. After a hiatus in the early 1970s, Brando appeared in supporting roles such as Jor-El in Superman (1978), as Colonel Kurtz in Apocalypse Now (1979), and Adam Steiffel in The Formula (1980), before taking a nine-year break from film.

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## Stage

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1944	<u>Bobino</u>	Giraffe/Guard	
	<u>I Remember Mama</u>	Nels	Broadway debut, original cast
1946	<u>Truckline Cafe</u>	Sage McRae	Original cast
	<u>A Flag Is Born</u>	David	
	<u>Candida</u>	Eugene Marchbanks	
	<u>Antigone</u>	Messenger	
1947	<u>Eagle Rampant</u> ( <u>The Eagle Has Two Heads</u> )	Stanislas	
	<u>A Streetcar Named Desire</u>	<u>Stanley Kowalski</u>	Original cast
1953	<u>Arms and the Man</u>	Sergius	Final play

## Film

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1950	<u>The Men</u>	Kenneth "Ken" Wilcheck / "Bud"	
1951	<u>A Streetcar Named Desire</u>	<u>Stanley Kowalski</u>	
1952	<u>Viva Zapata!</u>	<u>Emiliano Zapata</u>	
1953	<u>Julius Caesar</u>	<u>Mark Antony</u>	
	<u>The Wild One</u>	Johnny Strabler	
1954	<u>On the Waterfront</u>	Terry Malloy	
	<u>Désirée</u>	<u>Napoleon Bonaparte</u>	
1955	<u>Guys and Dolls</u>	Sky Masterson	

1956	<u>The Teahouse of the August Moon</u>	Sakini	
1957	<u>Sayonara</u>	Maj. Lloyd "Ace" Gruver, USAF	
1958	<u>The Young Lions</u>	Lt. Christian Diestl	
1960	<u>The Fugitive Kind</u>	Valentine "Snakeskin" Xavier	
1961	<u>One-Eyed Jacks</u>	Rio	Also director
1962	<u>Mutiny on the Bounty</u>	<u>1st Lt. Fletcher Christian</u>	
1963	<u>The Ugly American</u>	Ambassador Harrison Carter MacWhite	
1964	<u>Bedtime Story</u>	Freddy Benson	
1965	<u>Morituri</u>	Robert Crain	
1966	<u>The Chase</u>	Sheriff Calder	
	<u>The Appaloosa</u>	Matt Fletcher	
1967	<u>A Countess from Hong Kong</u>	Ogden Mears	
	<u>Reflections in a Golden Eye</u>	Maj. Weldon Penderton	
1968	<u>Candy</u>	Grindl	
1969	<u>The Night of the Following Day</u>	Chauffeur	
	<u>Burn!</u>	Sir William Walker	
1971	<u>The Nightcomers</u>	Peter Quint	
1972	<u>The Godfather</u>	<u>Don Vito Corleone</u>	
	<u>Last Tango in Paris</u>	Paul	
1976	<u>The Missouri Breaks</u>	Robert E. Lee Clayton	
1978	<u>Superman</u>	<u>Jor-El</u>	
	<u>Raoni</u>	Narrator	Voice Document ary
1979	<u>Apocalypse Now</u>	<u>Colonel Walter E. Kurtz</u>	
1980	<u>The Formula</u>	Adam Steiffel	

1989	<a href="#"><u>A Dry White Season</u></a>	Ian McKenzie	
1990	<a href="#"><u>The Freshman</u></a>	Carmine Sabatini	
1992	<a href="#"><u>Christopher Columbus: The Discovery</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Tomás de Torquemada</u></a>	
1995	<a href="#"><u>Don Juan DeMarco</u></a>	Dr. Jack Mickler	
1996	<a href="#"><u>Divine Rapture</u></a>	Priest	Unreleased
	<a href="#"><u>The Island of Dr. Moreau</u></a>	Dr. Moreau	
1997	<a href="#"><u>The Brave</u></a>	McCarthy	
1998	<a href="#"><u>Free Money</u></a>	Warden Sven "The Swede" Sorenson	
2001	<a href="#"><u>The Score</u></a>	Max	
2004	<a href="#"><u>Big Bug Man</u></a>	Mrs. Sour	Voice Unreleased

## Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1949	<a href="#"><u>Actors Studio</u></a>	Doctor	Episode: "I'm No Hero"
1950	<a href="#"><u>Come Out Fighting</u></a>	Jimmy Brand	<a href="#"><u>Pilot</u></a>
1979	<a href="#"><u>Roots: The Next Generations</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>George Lincoln Rockwell</u></a>	Episode #1.7

## Music Video

Music video credits				
Year	Song	Artist	Role	Refs.
2001	<a href="#"><u>"You Rock My World"</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Michael Jackson</u></a>	The Boss	

## Video Game

Video game credits				
Year	Title	Voice role	Notes	Refs.
2006	<a href="#"><u>The Godfather</u></a>	Don Vito Corleone	Cameo; released posthumously	

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# Awards & Nominations

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_awards\\_and\\_nominations  
received by Marlon Brando](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_awards_and_nominations_received_by_Marlon_Brando)

{Kindly visit the cited WEB LINK for COMPLETE details}

## Awards & Nominations



Brando in *On the Waterfront* (1954), for which he received his first [Academy Award](#).

### Awards and nominations

#### Totals

Wins	32
Nominations	69

[Marlon Brando](#) was an American actor known for his intense leading roles in film. He received numerous awards including two [Academy Awards](#), three [BAFTA Awards](#), five [Golden Globe Awards](#), and a [Primetime Emmy Award](#).

He received his first prize, the [Theatre World Awards](#), for his debut performances on the [Broadway](#) stages in [New York City](#). Brando made a cinematic impression instantly with his debut performance in [The Men](#) (1950), which he succeeded with his iconic portrayal of [Stanley Kowalski](#) in [A Streetcar Named Desire](#) (1951). He received his first of four consecutive [Oscar nominations](#) for the latter, which is a record in the [Best Actor](#) category and just 1 shy of the grand total held by both [Bette Davis](#) and [Greer Garson](#), with 5 each, in [Best Actress](#).

He would next receive Oscar nominations for portraying [Emiliano Zapata](#) in [Viva Zapata!](#) (1952); [Mark Antony](#) in [Julius Caesar](#) (1953); and finally, [Terry Malloy](#) in [On the Waterfront](#) (1954), for which he garnered his first Academy Award and [Golden Globe](#) victory. He also won the [Cannes Best Actor](#) prize for *Viva Zapata!* He earned further Golden Globes attention as [Best Comedy/Musical Actor](#) for [The Teahouse of the August Moon](#) (1956), but also some backlash for doing "[yellowface](#)" (white actors portraying Asian characters). [Sayonara](#) (1957) earned him his fifth Oscar

nomination, and third Globe recognition for a film. [The Young Lions](#) (1958) netted him his fourth BAFTA nomination. And [The Ugly American](#) (1963) garnered him his fourth Golden Globe nomination for a performance.

His iconic role as [Don Vito Corleone](#) in [The Godfather](#) (1972) accrued nominations from all 3 awards contingents. He received his second Academy Award and another Golden Globe, but controversially declined both awards. At the [1973 Oscars telecast](#), he sent [Sacheen Littlefeather](#) in his place to announce his refusal on behalf of "Hollywood's unfavorable depiction of Native Americans". He followed that up with his highly acclaimed performance in the controversial film, [Last Tango in Paris](#) (1972), earning his seventh Academy Award nomination. The [Jupiter Awards](#) honored his performance in [Apocalypse Now](#) (1979), and he won an [Emmy Award](#) portraying [neo-nazi George Lincoln Rockwell](#) in the television miniseries [Roots: The Next Generations](#) (1979). He was also nominated by the Directors Guild of America for his directorial achievement on [One-Eyed Jacks](#) (1961), a film which also won him the [Golden Shell](#) at the [San Sebastián International Film Festival](#).

His career featured some critically panned performances, notably in [The Formula](#) (1980) and [The Island of Dr. Moreau](#) (1996), both of which earned dubious distinction from the [Razzie Awards](#) and [Stinkers Bad Movie Awards](#). He won [Worst Supporting Actor](#) for the latter film from both organizations. However, he did receive his eighth Oscar nomination, and subsequent BAFTA and Golden Globe recognition, for his [supporting performance](#) in [A Dry White Season](#) (1989). These would become his final major distinctions in his six-decades-long career.

## All-Time Rankings

The following are the results from various polls.

Rank	Organisation	Category	Lost to
1st	Film School WTF	Top 100 Best Hollywood Actors of All Time	—
2nd	Filmsite	100 Greatest Movie Performances of All Time	<a href="#">Peter O'Toole</a>
	<a href="#">Internet Movie Database (IMDb)</a>	Top 100 Greatest Actors of All Time (The Ultimate List)	<a href="#">Jack Nicholson</a>
4th	<a href="#">AMC</a>	The 50 Greatest Actors of All Time	<a href="#">Tom Hanks</a>
	<a href="#">American Film Institute (AFI)</a>	<a href="#">100 Years...100 Stars</a>	<a href="#">Humphrey Bogart</a>
8th	TheTopTens	Top Ten Greatest Actors	<a href="#">Johnny Depp</a>
10th	Internet Movie Database (IMDb)	Best Actors - Top 250	<a href="#">Jack Nicholson</a>

# Acting Credits and Accolades

## {Click the Links}

Among the numerous accolades for his acting work, Brando has won two Academy Awards for Best Actor for his role as a longshoreman in the Elia Kazan directed drama *On the Waterfront* (1954) and Vito Corleone in the Francis Ford Coppola directed crime film *The Godfather* (1972). He also won three BAFTA Awards, five Golden Globe Awards and a Primetime Emmy Award.

Over his lengthy career he has been recognized by the [Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences](#) for the following performances:

- 24th Academy Awards: Best Actor in a Leading Role, nomination, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)
  - 25th Academy Awards: Best Actor in a Leading Role, nomination, *Viva Zapata!* (1952)
  - 26th Academy Awards: Best Actor in a Leading Role, nomination, *Julius Caesar* (1953)
  - 27th Academy Awards: Best Actor in a Leading Role, win, *On the Waterfront* (1954)
  - 30th Academy Awards: Best Actor in a Leading Role, nomination, *Sayonara* (1957)
  - 45th Academy Awards: Best Actor in a Leading Role, win, *The Godfather* (1972)
  - 46th Academy Awards: Best Actor in a Leading Role, nomination, *Last Tango in Paris* (1973)
  - 62nd Academy Awards: Best Actor in a Supporting Role, nomination, *A Dry White Season* (1989)

## **See also**

- List of oldest and youngest Academy Award winners and nominees
  - List of actors with Academy Award nominations
  - List of actors with two or more Academy Award nominations in acting categories
  - List of actors with two or more Academy Awards in acting categories
  - List of LGBT Academy Award winners and nominees



# Brando rejects Oscar Award

"The 'Godfather' wins best picture, Marlon Brando refuses to accept best actor."

## Today's Highlight in History:

On March 27, 1973, "The Godfather" won the Academy Award for best picture of 1972, but its star, Marlon Brando, refused to accept his Oscar for best actor, and in what would become one of the Oscars' most famous moments sent in his place actor and activist Sacheen Littlefeather, who spoke out about the depiction of Native Americans in Hollywood. (In 2022, months before her death, the Academy would apologize for the "abuse" Littlefeather received at the time.)



Sacheen Littlefeather holds a written statement from actor Marlon Brando refusing his Oscar on stage at the Academy Awards on March 27, 1973, in Los Angeles.

Visit the Web Link to watch the 'REFUSAL'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QUacU0I4yU> [2:21]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PxoAXHRoGs> [9:55]

On Indigenous Peoples' Day, we remember the Indigenous actress and activist Sacheen Littlefeather, who died last week at the age of 75, not long after she received an apology 50 years after she spoke at the Oscars in protest of Hollywood's portrayal of Native Americans. In 1973, she accepted an Oscar on behalf of Marlon Brando, who boycotted the ceremony, only to face boos from the crowd, threats of physical violence from the actor John Wayne and mocking by Clint Eastwood. The speech derailed her acting career, but she never stopped speaking out. "It was critical for the psyche of all our relations to bring awareness to and interrupt the negative interpretation and representation of Native American people by the film television and sports industries," said Littlefeather, reflecting on her speech at the Oscars in September, just three weeks before her death.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0PVid48u08> [6:24]

Sacheen Littlefeather recites the full acceptance speech that Marlon Brando intended for her to deliver on his behalf at the 1973 Academy Awards®. Brando asked Littlefeather to decline his Best Actor award in protest of the treatment of Native Americans in the entertainment industry and to bring attention to the AIM demonstrations at Wounded Knee. This recording is the first time the full speech has been read by Littlefeather for the Academy.

## SACHEEN LITTLEFEATHER:

Hello.

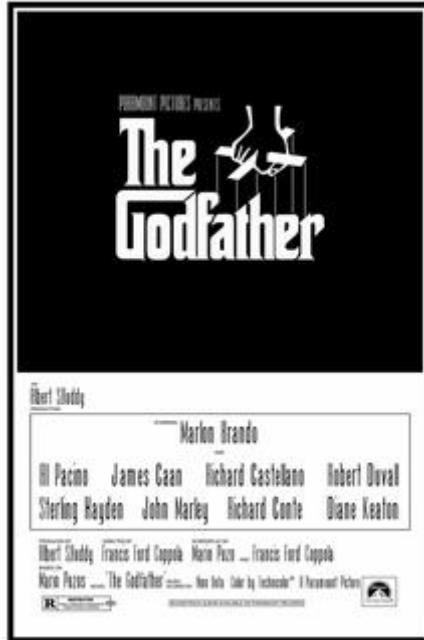
My name is Sacheen Littlefeather. I'm Apache and I am president of the National Native American Affirmative Image Committee. I'm representing Marlon Brando this evening and he has asked me to tell you in a very long speech, which I cannot share with you presently because of time but I will be glad to share with the press afterwards, that he very regretfully cannot accept this very generous award. And the reasons for this being are the treatment of American Indians today by the film industry - excuse me - and on television in movie reruns, and also with recent happenings at Wounded Knee. I beg at this time that I have not intruded upon this evening and that we will in the future, our hearts and our understandings will meet with love and generosity. Thank you on behalf of Marlon Brando.



# The Godfather

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Godfather](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Godfather)

## The Godfather



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<a href="#">Francis Ford Coppola</a>
Screenplay by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Mario Puzo</a></li><li>Francis Ford Coppola</li></ul>
Based on	<a href="#">The Godfather</a> by Mario Puzo
Produced by	<a href="#">Albert S. Ruddy</a>
Starring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Marlon Brando</a></li><li><a href="#">Al Pacino</a></li><li><a href="#">James Caan</a></li><li><a href="#">Richard Castellano</a></li><li><a href="#">Robert Duvall</a></li><li><a href="#">Sterling Hayden</a></li><li><a href="#">John Marley</a></li><li><a href="#">Richard Conte</a></li><li><a href="#">Diane Keaton</a></li></ul>
Cinematography	<a href="#">Gordon Willis</a>
Edited by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">William Reynolds</a></li><li><a href="#">Peter Zinner</a></li></ul>
Music by	<a href="#">Nino Rota</a>
Production companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Paramount Pictures</a></li><li>Alfran Productions</li></ul>
Distributed by	Paramount Pictures
Release dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>March 14, 1972 (<a href="#">Loew's State Theatre</a>)</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 24, 1972 (United States)</li> </ul>
<b>Running time</b>	175 minutes
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$6–7 million
<b>Box office</b>	\$250–291 million

**The Godfather** is a 1972 American [epic gangster film](#)<sup>[2]</sup> directed by [Francis Ford Coppola](#), who co-wrote the screenplay with [Mario Puzo](#), based on Puzo's best-selling [1969 novel](#). The film stars an ensemble cast including [Marlon Brando](#), [Al Pacino](#), [James Caan](#), [Richard Castellano](#), [Robert Duvall](#), [Sterling Hayden](#), [John Marley](#), [Richard Conte](#) and [Diane Keaton](#). It is the first installment in [The Godfather trilogy](#), chronicling the [Corleone family](#) under patriarch [Vito Corleone](#) (Brando) from 1945 to 1955. It focuses on the transformation of his youngest son, [Michael Corleone](#) (Pacino), from reluctant family outsider to ruthless [mafia boss](#).

[Paramount Pictures](#) obtained the rights to the novel for \$80,000, before it gained popularity.<sup>[3][4]</sup> Studio executives had trouble finding a director; the first few candidates turned down the position before Coppola signed on to direct the film but disagreement followed over casting several characters, in particular Vito (Brando) and Michael (Pacino). Filming took place primarily in locations around [New York City](#) and [Sicily](#), and it was completed ahead of schedule. The score was composed principally by [Nino Rota](#), with additional pieces by [Carmine Coppola](#).

*The Godfather* premiered at the [Loew's State Theatre](#) on March 14, 1972, and was widely released in the United States on March 24, 1972. It was the [highest-grossing film of 1972](#), and was for a time the [highest-grossing film ever made](#), earning between \$250 and \$291 million at the box office. The film was acclaimed by critics and audiences, who praised its performances—particularly those of Brando and Pacino—direction, screenplay, story, cinematography, editing, score and portrayal of the mafia. *The Godfather* launched the successful careers of Coppola, Pacino and other relative newcomers in the cast and crew. At the [45th Academy Awards](#), the film won [Best Picture](#), [Best Actor](#) (Brando) and [Best Adapted Screenplay](#) (for Puzo and Coppola). In addition, the seven other Oscar nominations included Pacino, Caan and Duvall, all for [Best Supporting Actor](#), and Coppola for [Best Director](#).

*The Godfather* is regarded as one of the [greatest and most influential films ever made](#), as well as a landmark of the [gangster](#) genre. It was selected for preservation in the U.S. [National Film Registry](#) of the [Library of Congress](#) in 1990, being deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" and is ranked the [second-greatest film in American cinema](#) (behind [Citizen Kane](#)) by the [American Film Institute](#). It was followed by sequels [The Godfather Part II](#) (1974) and [The Godfather Part III](#) (1990). [Pauline Kael](#) wrote that "If ever there was a great example of how the best popular movies come out of a merger of commerce and art, *The Godfather* is it."

## Plot

In 1945, the New York City [Corleone family don](#), [Vito Corleone](#), listens to requests during his daughter [Connie](#)'s wedding to [Carlo Rizzi](#). Vito's youngest son [Michael](#), a [Marine](#) who has thus far stayed out of the family business, introduces his girlfriend, [Kay Adams](#), to

his family at the reception. Johnny Fontane, a popular singer and Vito's [godson](#), seeks Vito's help in securing a movie role. Vito sends his [consigliere](#), [Tom Hagen](#), to persuade studio president Jack Woltz to offer Johnny the part. Woltz refuses Hagen's request at first, but soon complies after finding the severed head of his prized stud horse in his bed.

As Christmas approaches, drug baron [Virgil "The Turk" Sollozzo](#) asks Vito to invest in his narcotics business and for police protection. Vito declines, citing that involvement in narcotics would alienate his political connections. Suspicious of Sollozzo's partnership with the [Tattaglia](#) crime family, Vito sends his enforcer [Luca Brasi](#) to the Tattaglias on an espionage mission. Brasi is [garroted](#) to death during the initial meeting. Later, enforcers gun down Vito and coerce Hagen into a meeting. With Vito's first-born [Sonny](#) now in command, Sollozzo pressures Hagen to persuade Sonny to accept the narcotics deal. Vito survives the shooting and is visited in the hospital by Michael, who finds him unprotected after [NYPD](#) officers on Sollozzo's payroll clear out Vito's guards. Michael thwarts the attempt on his father's life but is beaten by corrupt police captain Mark McCluskey. After the attempted hit at the hospital, Sonny retaliates with a [hit](#) on Bruno Tattaglia. Sollozzo and McCluskey request to meet with Michael and settle the dispute. Michael feigns interest and agrees to meet, but hatches a plan with Sonny and Corleone [capo Clemenza](#) to kill them and go into hiding. Michael meets Sollozzo and McCluskey at a [Bronx](#) restaurant; after retrieving a handgun planted in the bathroom by Clemenza, he shoots both men dead.

Despite a clampdown by the authorities for the killing of a police captain, the [Five Families](#) erupt in open warfare. Michael takes refuge in Sicily and [Fredo](#), Vito's second son, is sheltered by [Moe Greene](#) in Las Vegas. In Sicily, Michael meets and marries a local woman, [Apollonia](#). Sonny publicly attacks and threatens Carlo for physically abusing Connie. When he abuses her again, Sonny speeds to their home but is ambushed and murdered by gangsters at a highway toll booth. Apollonia is killed shortly thereafter by a [car bomb](#) intended for Michael.

Devastated by Sonny's death and tired of war, Vito sets a meeting with the Five Families. He assures them that he will withdraw his opposition to their narcotics business and forgo avenging Sonny's murder. His safety guaranteed, Michael returns home to enter the family business and marry Kay. Kay gives birth to two children in the early 1950s. With his father nearing the end of his life and Fredo not suited to lead, Michael assumes the position of head of the Corleone family. Vito reveals to Michael that it was Don [Barzini](#) who ordered the hit on Sonny and warns him that Barzini would try to kill him at a meeting organized by a traitorous Corleone *capo*. With Vito's support, Michael relegates Hagen to managing operations in Las Vegas as he is not a "wartime consigliere". Michael travels to Las Vegas to buy out Greene's stake in the family's casinos and is dismayed to see that Fredo is more loyal to Greene than to his own family.

In 1955, Vito dies of a heart attack while playing with Michael's son [Anthony](#). At Vito's funeral, [Tessio](#) asks Michael to meet with Barzini, signaling his betrayal. The meeting is set for the same day as the baptism of Connie's baby. While Michael stands at the altar as the child's godfather, Corleone hitmen murder the dons of the Five Families, in addition to Greene for not selling his hotel and Tessio for betraying Michael. Michael extracts Carlo's confession for his involvement in Sonny's murder. He assures Carlo that he is being exiled, not murdered. However, Clemenza strangles Carlo in a car moments after his confession. Connie confronts Michael about his involvement in Carlo's death while Kay is in the room. Kay asks Michael if he ordered Carlo's death and is relieved when he denies responsibility. As she leaves, *capos* enter the office and pay reverence to Michael as "Don Corleone".



## Cast

**Brando (right) and Pacino as Don Vito and Michael Corleone, respectively**

- [Marlon Brando](#) as [Vito Corleone](#): [crime boss](#) and patriarch of the [Corleone family](#)
  - [Al Pacino](#) as [Michael Corleone](#): Vito's youngest son
  - [James Caan](#) as [Sonny Corleone](#): Vito's eldest son
  - [Richard Castellano](#) as [Peter Clemenza](#): a [caporegime](#) in the Corleone crime family, Sonny's godfather
  - [Robert Duvall](#) as [Tom Hagen](#): Corleone [consigliere](#), lawyer, and unofficial adopted member of the Corleone family
  - [Sterling Hayden](#) as [Captain McCluskey](#): a corrupt police captain on Sollozzo's payroll
  - [John Marley](#) as Jack Woltz: Hollywood film producer who is intimidated by the Corleones
  - [Richard Conte](#) as [Emilio Barzini](#): a crime boss of a rival family
  - [Al Lettieri](#) as [Virgil Sollozzo](#): an adversary who attempts to pressure Vito to get into the drug business, backed by the Tattaglia family
  - [Diane Keaton](#) as [Kay Adams-Corleone](#): Michael's girlfriend and, later, second wife
  - [Abe Vigoda](#) as [Salvatore Tessio](#): a [caporegime](#) in the Corleone crime family
  - [Talia Shire](#) as [Connie Corleone](#): Vito's only daughter
  - [Gianni Russo](#) as [Carlo Rizzi](#): Connie's abusive husband
  - [John Cazale](#) as [Fredo Corleone](#): Vito's middle son
  - [Rudy Bond](#) as Cuneo: a crime boss of a rival family
  - [Al Martino](#) as [Johnny Fontane](#): a singer and Vito's godson
  - [Morgana King](#) as [Carmela Corleone](#): Vito's wife
  - [Lenny Montana](#) as [Luca Brasi](#): Vito's enforcer
  - [Johnny Martino](#) as Paulie Gatto: a soldier in the Corleone crime family
  - Salvatore Corsitto as [Amerigo Bonasera](#): the undertaker who asks for a favor at Connie's wedding
  - [Richard Bright](#) as [Al Neri](#): the soldier in the Corleone crime family who becomes Michael's enforcer
  - [Alex Rocco](#) as [Moe Greene](#): a [Jewish mobster](#) and [Las Vegas](#) casino proprietor
  - [Tony Giorgio](#) as Bruno Tattaglia
  - [Vito Scotti](#) as Nazarine
  - Tere Livrano as [Theresa Hagen](#): Tom's wife
  - [Victor Rendina](#) as Philip Tattaglia: head of the Tattaglia crime family and prostitution crime boss
  - [Jeannie Linero](#) as [Lucy Mancini](#): Connie's friend and Sonny's mistress
  - [Julie Gregg](#) as [Sandra Corleone](#): Sonny's wife
  - Ardell Sheridan as Mrs. Clemenza

Other actors playing smaller roles in the Sicilian sequence are [Simonetta Stefanelli](#) as [Apollonia Vitelli-Corleone](#), [Angelo Infanti](#) as Fabrizio, [Corrado Gaipa](#) as Don Tommasino, [Franco Citti](#) as Calò and [Saro Urzì](#) as Vitelli.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

## Production

## **Development**

The film is based on [Mario Puzo's](#) [The Godfather](#), which remained on [The New York Times Best Seller](#) list for 67 weeks and sold over nine million copies in two years. Published in 1969, it became the best selling published work in history for several years. [Burt Lancaster](#) and [Danny Thomas](#) both expressed interest adapting the book. [Paramount Pictures](#) originally found out about Puzo's novel in 1967 when a literary scout for the company contacted then Paramount Vice President of Production [Peter Bart](#) about Puzo's unfinished sixty-page manuscript titled *Mafia*. Bart believed the work was "much beyond a Mafia story" and offered Puzo a \$12,500 option for the work, with an option for \$80,000 if the finished work were to be made into a film. [\[10\]](#)[\[14\]](#) Despite Puzo's agent telling him to turn down the offer, Puzo was desperate for money and accepted the deal. Paramount's [Robert Evans](#) relates that, when they met in early 1968, he offered Puzo the deal after the author confided in him that he urgently needed \$10,000 to pay off gambling debts.

In March 1967, Paramount announced that they backed Puzo's upcoming work in the hopes of making a film. In 1969, Paramount confirmed their intentions to make a film out of the novel for the price of \$80,000, with aims to have the film released on Christmas Day in 1971. On March 23, 1970, [Albert S. Ruddy](#) was officially announced as the film's producer, in part because studio executives were impressed with his interview and because he was known for bringing his films in under budget.

## Direction



Francis Ford Coppola (pictured in 1973) was selected as director. Paramount wanted the picture to be directed by an Italian American to make the film "ethnic to the core".

Evans wanted the picture to be directed by an [Italian American](#) to make the film "ethnic to the core". Paramount's latest mafia movie, [The Brotherhood](#), had done very poorly at the box office; Evans believed that the reason for its failure was its almost complete lack of cast members or creative personnel of Italian descent (the director [Martin Ritt](#) and star [Kirk Douglas](#) were not Italian). [Sergio Leone](#) was Paramount's first choice to direct the film. Leone turned down the option, in order to work on his own gangster film [Once Upon a Time in America](#). [Peter Bogdanovich](#) was then approached but he also declined the offer because he was not interested in the mafia. In addition, [Peter Yates](#), [Richard](#)

[Brooks](#), [Arthur Penn](#), [Franklin J. Schaffner](#), [Costa-Gavras](#), and [Otto Preminger](#) were all offered the position and declined. Evans' chief assistant Peter Bart suggested [Francis Ford Coppola](#), as a director of Italian ancestry who would work for a low sum and budget after the poor performance of his latest film [The Rain People](#). Coppola initially turned down the job because he found Puzo's novel sleazy and sensationalist, describing it as "pretty cheap stuff". At the time Coppola's studio, [American Zoetrope](#), owed over \$400,000 to [Warner Bros.](#) for budget overruns with the film [THX 1138](#) and when coupled with his poor financial standing, along with advice from friends and family, Coppola reversed his initial decision and took the job. Coppola was officially announced as director of the film on September 28, 1970. Coppola agreed to receive \$125,000 and six percent of the gross rentals. Coppola later found a deeper theme for the material and decided that the film should not be about organized crime but a family chronicle, a metaphor for capitalism in America.

## Coppola and Paramount

Before *The Godfather* was in production, Paramount had been going through an unsuccessful period. In addition to the failure of *The Brotherhood*, other recent films that were produced or co-produced by Paramount had greatly exceeded their budgets: *Darling Lili*, *Paint Your Wagon*, and *Waterloo*.<sup>[11][25]</sup> The budget for the film was originally \$2.5 million but as the book grew in popularity Coppola argued for and ultimately received a larger budget. Paramount executives wanted the movie to be set in contemporary *Kansas City* and shot in the studio backlot in order to cut down on costs. Coppola objected and wanted to set the movie in the same time period as the novel, the 1940s and 1950s; Coppola's reasons included Michael Corleone's spell in the wartime Marine Corps, the emergence of corporate America, and America in the years after World War II. The novel was becoming increasingly successful and so Coppola's wishes were eventually granted. The studio heads subsequently let Coppola film on location in New York City and Sicily.

Gulf+Western executive [Charles Bluhdorn](#) was frustrated with Coppola over the number of screen tests he had performed without finding a person to play the various roles. Production quickly fell behind because of Coppola's indecisiveness and conflicts with Paramount, which led to costs being around \$40,000 per day. With costs rising, Paramount had the Vice President, Jack Ballard, keep a close eye on production expenses. While filming, Coppola stated that he felt he could be fired at any point as he knew Paramount executives were not happy with many of the decisions he had made. Coppola was aware that Evans had asked [Elia Kazan](#) to take over directing the film because he feared that Coppola was too inexperienced to cope with the increased size of the production. Coppola was also convinced that the film editor, [Aram Avakian](#), and the assistant director, Steve Kestner, were conspiring to get him fired. Avakian complained to Evans that he could not edit the scenes correctly because Coppola was not shooting enough footage. Evans was satisfied with the footage being sent to the West Coast—in which there was also the scene of Michael's double murder in the Bronx restaurant—and authorized Coppola to fire them both. Coppola later explained, "Like the godfather, I fired people as a preemptory strike. The people who were angling the most to have me fired, I had fired." Brando threatened to quit if Coppola was fired.

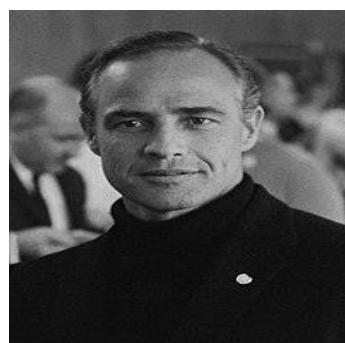
Paramount wanted *The Godfather* to appeal to a wide audience and threatened Coppola with a "violence coach" to make the film more exciting. Coppola added a few more violent scenes to keep the studio happy. The scene in which Connie smashes [crockery](#) after finding out Carlo has been cheating was added for this reason.

## Writing

On April 14, 1970, it was revealed that Puzo was hired by Paramount for \$100,000, along with a percentage of the film's profits, to work on the screenplay for the film. Working from the book, Coppola wanted to have the themes of culture, character, power, and family at the forefront of the film, whereas Puzo wanted to retain aspects from his novel and his initial draft of 150 pages was finished on August 10, 1970. After Coppola was hired as director, both Puzo and Coppola worked on the screenplay, but separately. Puzo worked on his draft in Los Angeles, while Coppola wrote his version in [San Francisco](#). Coppola created a book where he tore pages out of Puzo's book and pasted them into his book. There, he made notes about each of the book's fifty scenes, which related to major themes prevalent in the scene, whether the scene should be included in the film, along with ideas and concepts that could be used when filming to make the film true to Italian culture. The two remained in contact while they wrote their respective screenplays and made decisions on what to include and what to remove for the final version. A second draft was completed on March 1, 1971, and was 173 pages long. The final screenplay was finished on March 29, 1971, and wound up being 163 pages long, 40 pages over what Paramount had asked for. When filming, Coppola referred to the notebook he had created over the final draft of the screenplay. Screenwriter [Robert Towne](#) did uncredited work on the script, particularly on the Pacino-Brando garden scene. Despite finishing the third draft, some scenes in the film were still not written yet and were written during production.

The [Italian-American Civil Rights League](#), led by mobster [Joseph Colombo](#), maintained that the film emphasized stereotypes about Italian-Americans, and wanted all uses of the words "[mafia](#)" and "[Cosa Nostra](#)" to be removed from the script.[\[65\]](#)[\[19\]](#)[\[66\]](#)[\[67\]](#)[\[68\]](#) The league also requested that all the money earned from the premiere be donated to the league's fund to build a new hospital. Coppola claimed that Puzo's screenplay only contained two instances of the word "mafia" being used, while "Cosa Nostra" was not used at all. They were removed and replaced with other terms, without compromising the story. The league eventually gave its support for the script. Earlier, the windows of producer [Albert S. Ruddy](#)'s car had been shot out with a note left on the dashboard which essentially said, "shut down the movie—or else." However, it was revealed in August 1971 that Ruddy personally met with [Colombo family](#) head Joseph Colombo, Columbo's son Anthony and about 1,500 delegates of Columbo's Italian-American Civil Rights League when he was developing the film, with the first meeting being held on February 25, 1971. Ruddy would also hold numerous meetings with Anthony Colombo. These meetings led to Ruddy agreeing to base the film on individuals and assuring that it would not defame or stereotype Italians. It was even reported that Anthony Colombo eventually made Ruddy an honorary captain of the League.

## Casting



[Marlon Brando](#) was chosen to portray [Vito Corleone](#).



Al Pacino was chosen to portray Michael Corleone.



James Caan portrayed Sonny Corleone.

Puzo was first to show interest in having [Marlon Brando](#) portray Don Vito Corleone by sending a letter to Brando in which he stated Brando was the "only actor who can play the Godfather". Despite Puzo's wishes, the executives at Paramount were against having Brando, partly because of the poor performance of his recent films and also his short temper. Brando was hesitant about getting back into acting, but his secretary Alice Marchak persuaded him to audition. Coppola favored Brando or [Laurence Olivier](#) for the role, but Olivier's agent refused the role claiming Olivier was sick; however, Olivier went on to star in [Sleuth](#) later that year. Evans pushed for either [Carlo Ponti](#) or [Ernest Borgnine](#) to receive the part. Bluhdorn proposed [Charles Bronson](#) for the role. Others considered were [George C. Scott](#), [Richard Conte](#), [Anthony Quinn](#) and [Orson Welles](#). Welles was Paramount's preferred choice for the role.

After months of debate between Coppola and Paramount over Brando, the two finalists for the role were Borgnine and Brando; Paramount president [Stanley Jaffe](#) required Brando to perform a screen test. Coppola did not want to offend Brando and stated that he needed to test equipment in order to set up the screen test at Brando's [California](#) residence. For make-up, Brando stuck cotton balls in his cheeks, put shoe polish in his hair to darken it, and rolled his collar. Coppola placed Brando's audition tape in the middle of the videos of the audition tapes as the Paramount executives watched them. The executives were impressed with Brando's efforts and allowed Coppola to cast Brando for the role if Brando accepted a lower salary and put up a bond to ensure he would not cause any delays in production. Brando earned \$1.6 million from a net participation deal.

From the start of production, Coppola wanted [Robert Duvall](#) to play the part of Tom Hagen. After screen testing several other actors, Coppola eventually got his wish and Duvall was awarded the part. [Al Martino](#), a then famed singer in nightclubs, was notified of the character Johnny Fontane by a friend who read the novel and felt Martino represented the character of Johnny Fontane. Martino then contacted producer [Albert S. Ruddy](#), who gave him the part. However, Martino was stripped of the part after Coppola became director and then awarded the role to singer [Vic Damone](#). According to Martino, after being stripped of the role, he went to [Russell Bufalino](#), his godfather and a crime boss, who then arranged for news articles to be published that claimed Coppola was unaware of Ruddy giving Martino the part. Damone eventually dropped the role because he did not want to provoke the mob, in addition to the salary being too low. Ultimately, although Frank Sinatra threatened to bar him from Las Vegas if he took the role, the part of Johnny Fontane was given to Martino.

Coppola cast [Diane Keaton](#) for the role of Kay Adams owing to her reputation for being [eccentric](#). [John Cazale](#) was given the part of Fredo Corleone after Coppola saw him perform in an Off Broadway production. [Gianni Russo](#) was given the role of Carlo Rizzi after he was asked to perform a screen test in which he acted out the fight between Rizzi and Connie.

Nearing the start of filming on March 29, [Michael Corleone](#) had yet to be cast. Paramount executives wanted a popular actor, either [Warren Beatty](#) or [Robert Redford](#). Producer Robert Evans wanted [Ryan O'Neal](#) to receive the role, owing in part to his recent success in [Love Story](#). Pacino was Coppola's favorite for the role as he could picture him roaming the Sicilian countryside, and wanted an unknown actor who looked like an Italian-American. However, Paramount executives found Pacino to be too short to play Michael. [Dustin Hoffman](#), [Martin Sheen](#), [Dean Stockwell](#), and [James Caan](#) also auditioned. Keaton read with both Caan and Sheen. [Burt Reynolds](#) was offered the role of Michael, but Brando threatened to quit if Reynolds was hired. Reynolds declined the role. [Jack Nicholson](#) was also offered the role, but declined it as he felt that an Italian-American actor should play the role. Caan was well received by the Paramount executives and was given the part of Michael initially, while the role of [Sonny Corleone](#) was awarded to [Carmine Caridi](#). Coppola still pushed for Pacino to play Michael after the fact and Evans eventually conceded, allowing Pacino to have the role of Michael as long as Caan played Sonny. Evans preferred Caan over Caridi because Caan was seven inches shorter than Caridi, which was much closer to Pacino's height. Despite agreeing to play Michael Corleone, Pacino was contracted to star in MGM's *The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight*, but the two studios agreed on a settlement and Pacino was signed by Paramount three weeks before shooting began.

[Robert De Niro](#) originally was given the part of Paulie Gatto. [\[104\]](#) [\[80\]](#) A spot in [The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight](#) opened up after [Al Pacino](#) quit the project in favor of *The Godfather*, which led De Niro to audition for the role and leave *The Godfather* after receiving the part. De Niro also cast for the role of Sonny Corleone. After De Niro quit, [Johnny Martino](#) was given the role of Gatto.

Coppola gave several roles in the film to family members. He gave his sister, [Talia Shire](#), the role of Connie Corleone. His daughter [Sofia](#), then an infant, appeared as Michael Francis Rizzi, Connie's and Carlo's newborn son. [Carmine Coppola](#), his father, appeared in the film as an extra playing a piano during a scene. Coppola's wife, mother, and two sons all appeared as extras in the picture.

Several smaller roles, like [Luca Brasi](#), were cast after the filming had started.

Ruddy's casting choices would earn him more approval from the [Italian-American Civil Rights League](#), with Anthony Colombo reported to have made Ruddy a league captain after the meeting where the film's bit players and extras were chosen.

## Filming



The Don Barzini assassination scene was filmed on the steps of the [New York Supreme Court building](#) on [Foley Square](#) in [Manhattan](#).

Before the filming began, the cast received a two-week period for rehearsal, which included a dinner where each actor and actress had to assume character for its duration. Filming was scheduled to begin on March 29, 1971, with the scene between Michael Corleone and Kay Adams as they leave [Best & Co.](#) in New York City after shopping for Christmas gifts. The weather on March 23 predicted snow flurries, which caused Ruddy to move the filming date forward; snow did not materialize and a snow machine was used. Principal filming in New York continued until July 2, 1971. Coppola asked for a three-week break before heading overseas to film in Sicily. Following the crew's departure for Sicily, Paramount announced that the release date would be moved to early 1972.

Cinematographer [Gordon Willis](#) initially turned down the opportunity to film *The Godfather* because the production seemed "chaotic" to him. After Willis later accepted the offer, he and Coppola agreed to not use any modern filming devices, helicopters, or zoom lenses. Willis and Coppola chose to use a "tableau format" of filming to make it seem like a painting. He made use of shadows and low light levels throughout the film to show psychological developments. Willis and Coppola agreed to interplay light and dark scenes throughout the film. Willis underexposed the film in order to create a "yellow tone". The scenes in Sicily were shot to display the countryside and "display a more romantic land," giving these scenes a "softer, more romantic" feel than the New York scenes.



1941 [Packard Super Eight](#) featured in *The Godfather*

One of the film's most shocking moments involved an actual severed horse's head. The filming location for this scene is contested, as some sources indicate it was filmed at the [Beverly Estate](#), while others indicate it was filmed at [Sands Point Preserve](#) on Long

Island. Coppola received some criticism for the scene, although the head was obtained from a dog-food company from a horse that was to be killed regardless of the film.<sup>[135][136][137]</sup> On June 22, the scene where Sonny is killed was shot on a runway at [Mitchel Field](#) in Uniondale, where three tollbooths were built, along with guard rails, and billboards to set the scene. Sonny's car was a 1941 Lincoln Continental with holes drilled in it to resemble bullet holes. The scene took three days to film and cost over \$100,000.

Coppola's request to film on location was observed; approximately 90 percent was shot in New York City and its surrounding suburbs, using over 120 distinct locations. Several scenes were filmed at [Filmways](#) in [East Harlem](#). The remaining portions were filmed in California, or in Sicily. The scenes set in [Las Vegas](#) were not shot on location because there were insufficient funds. [Savoca](#) and [Forza d'Agrò](#) were the Sicilian towns featured in the film. The opening wedding scene was shot in a [Staten Island](#) neighborhood using almost 750 locals as extras. The house used as the Corleone household and the wedding location was at 110 Longfellow Avenue in the [Todt Hill](#) neighborhood of Staten Island. The wall around the Corleone compound was made from [styrofoam](#). Scenes set in and around the Corleone olive oil business were filmed on [Mott Street](#).

After filming had ended on August 7, post-production efforts were focused on trimming the film to a manageable length. In addition, producers and director were still including and removing different scenes from the end product, along with trimming certain sequences. In September, the first rough cut of the film was viewed. Many of the scenes removed from the film were centered around Sonny, which did not advance the plot. By November, Coppola and Ruddy finished the semi-final cut. Debates over personnel involved with the final editing remained even 25 years after the release of the film. The film was shown to Paramount staff and exhibitors in late December 1971 and January 1972.

## Music

Coppola hired Italian composer [Nino Rota](#) to create the underscore for the film, including "[Love Theme from The Godfather](#)". For the score, Rota was to relate to the situations and characters in the film. Rota synthesized new music for the film and took some parts from his 1958 [Fortunella](#) film score, in order to create an Italian feel and evoke the tragedy within the film. Paramount executive Evans found the score to be too "highbrow" and did not want to use it; however, it was used after Coppola managed to get Evans to agree. Coppola believed that Rota's musical piece gave the film even more of an Italian feel. Coppola's father, [Carmine](#), created some additional music for the film, particularly the music played by the band during the opening wedding scene.

Incidental music includes "[C'è la luna mezzo mare](#)", Cherubino's aria, "Non so più cosa son", from [Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro](#) and "Brindisi", from [Verdi's La traviata](#). There was a soundtrack released for the film in 1972 in vinyl form by [Paramount Records](#), on CD in 1991 by [Geffen Records](#), and digitally by Geffen on August 18, 2005.<sup>[162]</sup> The album contains over 31 minutes of music that was used in the film, most of which was composed by Rota, along with a song from Coppola and one by Johnny Farrow and [Marty Symes](#). [AllMusic](#) gave the album five out of five, with editor Zach Curd saying it is a "dark, looming, and elegant soundtrack". An editor for Filmtracks believed that Rota was successful in relating the music to the film's core aspects. [Bach's Prelude and Fugue in D major, BWV 532](#) and [Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 582](#) are played during the baptism scene.

## **Release**

### **Theatrical**

The world premiere for *The Godfather* took place at [Loew's State Theatre](#) in New York City on Tuesday, March 14, 1972, almost three months after the planned release date of Christmas Day in 1971, with profits from the premiere donated to The Boys Club of New York. Before the film premiered, the film had already made \$15 million from advance rentals from over 400 theaters. The following day, the film opened in five theaters in New York (Loew's [State I and II](#), Orpheum, Cine and Tower East). Next was the [Imperial Theatre](#) in [Toronto](#) on March 17 and then [Los Angeles](#) at two theaters on March 22. *The Godfather* was released on March 24, 1972, throughout the rest of the [United States](#) reaching 316 theatres five days later.

### **Home media**

The television rights were sold for a record \$10 million to [NBC](#) for one showing over two nights. The theatrical version of *The Godfather* debuted on American network television on NBC with only minor edits. The first half of the film aired on Saturday, November 16, 1974, and the second half two days later. The television airings attracted a large audience with an average [Nielsen rating](#) of 38.2 and audience share of 59% making it the eighth most-watched film on television, with the broadcast of the second half getting the third-best rating for a film on TV behind [Airport](#) and [Love Story](#) with a rating of 39.4 and 57% share. The broadcast helped generate anticipation for the upcoming sequel. The next year, Coppola created [The Godfather Saga](#) expressly for American television in a release that combined *The Godfather* and *The Godfather Part II* with unused footage from those two films in a chronological telling that toned down the violent, sexual, and profane material for its [NBC](#) debut on November 18, 1977. In 1981, Paramount released the *Godfather Epic* boxed set, which also told the story of the first two films in chronological order, again with additional scenes, but not redacted for broadcast sensibilities. *The Godfather Trilogy* was released in 1992, in which the films are fundamentally in chronological order.

*The Godfather Family: A Look Inside* was a 73-minute documentary released in 1991. Directed by Jeff Warner, the film featured some behind the scenes content from all three films, interviews with the actors, and screen tests. *The Godfather DVD Collection* was released on October 9, 2001, in a package that contained all three films—each with a commentary track by Coppola—and a bonus disc containing *The Godfather Family: A Look Inside*. The DVD also held a Corleone family tree, a "Godfather" timeline, and footage of the Academy Award acceptance speeches.

### ***The Godfather: The Coppola Restoration***

During the film's original theatrical release, the original negatives were worn down due to the reel being printed so much to meet demand. In addition, the duplicate negative was lost in Paramount archives. In 2006 Coppola contacted [Steven Spielberg](#)—whose studio [DreamWorks](#) had recently been bought out by Paramount—about restoring *The Godfather*. [Robert A. Harris](#) was hired to oversee the restoration of *The Godfather* and its two sequels, with the film's cinematographer Willis participating in the restoration. Work began in November 2006 by repairing the negatives so they could go through a digital scanner to produce high-resolution 4K files. If a negative were damaged and discolored, work was done digitally to restore it to its original look. After a year and a half of working on the restoration, the project was complete. Paramount called the finished product *The Godfather: The Coppola Restoration* and released it to the public on

September 23, 2008, on both DVD and [Blu-ray Disc](#). Dave Kehr of *The New York Times* believed the restoration brought back the "golden glow of their original theatrical screenings". As a whole, the restoration of the film was well received by critics and Coppola. *The Godfather: The Coppola Restoration* contains several new special features that play in high definition, (including additional scenes, behind the scenes footage, etc.).

Paramount Pictures restored and remastered *The Godfather*, *The Godfather Part II*, and [\*The Godfather Coda: The Death of Michael Corleone\*](#) (a re-edited cut of the third film) for a limited theatrical run and home media release on Blu-ray and 4K Blu-ray to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the premiere of *The Godfather*. The disc editions were released on March 22, 2022.

## Reception

### Box office

*The Godfather* was a [blockbuster](#), breaking many box office records to become the [highest grossing film of 1972](#). The film's opening day gross from five theaters was \$57,829 with ticket prices increased from \$3 to \$3.50. Prices in New York increased further at the weekend to \$4, and the number of showings increased from four times a day to seven times a day. The film grossed \$61,615 in Toronto for the weekend<sup>[167]</sup> and \$240,780 in New York, for an opening weekend gross of \$302,395. The film grossed \$454,000 for the week in New York and \$115,000 in Toronto for a first week gross of \$568,800, which made it number one at the U.S. box office for the week. In its first five days of national release, it grossed \$6.8 million, taking its gross up to \$7,397,164. A week later its gross had reached \$17,291,705 with the one week gross of around \$10 million being an industry record. It grossed another \$8.7 million by April 9 to take its gross to \$26,000,815. After 18 weeks at [number one in the United States](#), the film had grossed \$101 million, the fastest film to reach that milestone. Some news articles at the time proclaimed it was the first film to gross \$100 million in North America, but such accounts are erroneous; this record belongs to [\*The Sound of Music\*](#), released in 1965. It remained at number one in the US for another five weeks to bring its total to 23 consecutive weeks at number one before being unseated by [\*Butterflies Are Free\*](#) for one week before becoming number one for another three weeks.

The film eventually earned \$81.5 million in [theatrical rentals](#) in the US and Canada during its initial release, increasing its earnings to \$85.7 million through a reissue in 1973, and including a limited re-release in 1997, it ultimately earned an equivalent exhibition gross of \$135 million, with a production cost of \$6.5 million. It displaced [\*Gone with the Wind\*](#) to claim the record as the top rentals earner, a position it would retain until the release of [\*Jaws\*](#) in 1975. The film repeated its native success overseas, earning in total an unprecedented \$142 million in worldwide theatrical rentals, to become the [highest net earner](#).<sup>[203]</sup> Profits were so high for *The Godfather* that earnings for [\*Gulf & Western Industries, Inc.\*](#), which owned Paramount, jumped from 77 cents per share to \$3.30 a share for the year, according to a [\*Los Angeles Times\*](#) article, dated December 13, 1972. Re-released eight more times since 1997, it has grossed between \$250 million and \$291 million in worldwide box office receipts, and adjusted for ticket price [inflation](#) in North America, ranks among the top 25 [highest-grossing films](#).

### Critical response

*The Godfather* has received overwhelming critical acclaim and is seen as one of the [greatest and most influential films of all time](#), particularly of

the [gangster](#) genre. On [review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes](#), the film holds an approval rating of 97% based on 151 reviews, with an average rating of 9.4/10. The website's critics consensus reads, "One of Hollywood's greatest critical and commercial successes, *The Godfather* gets everything right; not only did the movie transcend expectations, it established new benchmarks for American cinema." [Metacritic](#), which uses a [weighted average](#), has assigned the film a score of 100 out of 100 based on 16 critic reviews, indicating "universal acclaim".

[The Village Voice](#)'s [Andrew Sarris](#) believed [Marlon Brando](#) portrayed Vito Corleone well and that his character dominated each scene it appeared in, but felt Puzo and Coppola had the character of Michael Corleone too focused on revenge. In addition, Sarris stated that [Richard Castellano](#), [Robert Duvall](#), and [James Caan](#) were good in their respective roles. [Pauline Kael](#) of [The New Yorker](#) wrote that Coppola "has stayed very close to the book's greased-lightning sensationalism and yet has made a movie with the spaciousness and strength that popular novels such as [Dickens'](#) used to have." She concluded that "*The Godfather* is popular melodrama, but it expresses a new tragic realism."

[Roger Ebert](#) of the [Chicago Sun Times](#) praised the casting by Coppola and Ruddy: "As the Irish cop, for example, they simply slide in [Sterling Hayden](#) and let the character go about his business." He wrote that "Coppola has found a style and a visual look for all this material so that *The Godfather* becomes something of a rarity: a really good movie squeezed from a bestseller. The decision to shoot everything in period decor (the middle and late 1940s) was crucial; if they'd tried to save money by bring everything up to date, as they'd originally planned, the movie simply wouldn't have worked. But it's uncannily successful as a period piece, filled with sleek, bulging limousines and postwar fedoras. Coppola and his cinematographer, Gordon Willis, also do some interesting things with the color photography. The early scenes have a reddish-brown tint, slightly overexposed and feeling like nothing so much as a 1946 newspaper rotogravure supplement." Ebert named *The Godfather* the best film of 1972. The [Chicago Tribune](#)'s [Gene Siskel](#) gave the film four out of four, commenting that it was "very good".

[Desson Howe](#) of [The Washington Post](#) called the film a "jewel" and wrote that Coppola deserves most of the credit for the film. Writing for [The New York Times](#), [Vincent Canby](#) felt that Coppola had created one of the "most brutal and moving chronicles of American life" and went on to say that it "transcends its immediate milieu and genre". Director [Stanley Kubrick](#) thought the film had the best cast ever and could be the best movie ever made. Director [Steven Spielberg](#) listed it among his favorite films. [Stanley Kauffmann](#) of [The New Republic](#) wrote negatively of the film in a contemporary review, claiming that Pacino "rattles around in a part too demanding for him", while also criticizing Brando's make-up and Rota's score.

Previous mafia films had looked at the gangs from the perspective of an outraged outsider. In contrast, *The Godfather* presents the gangster's perspective of the Mafia as a response to corrupt society. Although the Corleone family is presented as immensely rich and powerful, no scenes depict prostitution, gambling, loan sharking or other forms of racketeering. George De Stefano argues that the setting of a criminal counterculture allows for unapologetic gender stereotyping (such as when Vito tells a weepy Johnny Fontane to "act like a man") and is an important part of the film's appeal.

Remarking on the fortieth anniversary of the film's release, film critic [John Podhoretz](#) praised *The Godfather* as "arguably the great American work of popular art" and "the summa of all great moviemaking before it". Two years before, Roger Ebert had

written in his journal that it "comes closest to being a film everyone agrees ... is unquestionably great". Ebert added it to his canon of great movies, writing that "a strange thing happed as I watched the restored version: Familiar as I am with Robert Duvall, when he first appeared on the screen I found myself thinking, 'There's Tom Hagen.' Coppola went to Italy to find [Nino Rota](#), composer of many [Fellini](#) films, to score the picture. Hearing the sadness and nostalgia of the movie's main theme, I realized what the music was telling us: Things would have turned out better if only they had listened to the Godfather."

## Accolades

*The Godfather* was nominated for seven awards at the [30th Golden Globe Awards](#): [Best Picture – Drama](#), [James Caan](#) for [Best Supporting Actor](#), [Al Pacino](#) and [Marlon Brando](#) for [Best Actor – Drama](#), [Best Score](#), [Best Director](#), and [Best Screenplay](#). When the winners were announced on January 28, 1973, the film had won the categories for: Best Screenplay, Best Director, Best Actor – Drama (Brando), Best Original Score, and Best Picture – Drama.

Rota's score was also nominated for [Grammy Award for Best Original Score for a Motion Picture or TV Special](#) at the [15th Grammy Awards](#). Rota was announced the winner of the category on March 3 at the Grammys' ceremony in [Nashville, Tennessee](#).

When the nominations for the [45th Academy Awards](#) were revealed on February 12, 1973, *The Godfather* was nominated for eleven awards. The nominations were for: [Best Picture](#), [Best Costume Design](#), Marlon Brando for [Best Actor](#), [Mario Puzo](#) and [Francis Ford Coppola](#) for [Best Adapted Screenplay](#), Pacino, Caan, and [Robert Duvall](#) for [Best Supporting Actor](#), [Best Film Editing](#), [Nino Rota](#) for [Best Original Score](#), Coppola for [Best Director](#), and [Best Sound](#). Upon further review of Rota's [love theme from \*The Godfather\*](#), the academy found that Rota had used a similar score in [Eduardo De Filippo's](#) 1958 comedy [Fortunella](#). This led to re-balloting, where members of the music branch chose from six films: *The Godfather* and the five films that had been on the shortlist for best original dramatic score but did not get nominated. [John Addison's](#) score for *Sleuth* won this new vote, and thus replaced Rota's score on the official list of nominees. Going into the awards ceremony, *The Godfather* was seen as the favorite to take home the most awards. From the nominations that *The Godfather* had remaining, it only won three of the Academy Awards: Best Actor for Brando, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Picture.

Brando, who did not attend the Golden Globes ceremony two months earlier, boycotted the Academy Awards ceremony and declined the Oscar, becoming the second actor to decline a Best Actor award after [George C. Scott](#) in [1971](#). Brando sent American Indian Rights activist [Sacheen Littlefeather](#) in his place, to announce at the awards podium Brando's reasons for declining the award, which were based on his objection to the depiction of American Indians by Hollywood and television. Pacino also did not attend the ceremony; he was allegedly insulted at being nominated for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor, when he had more screen time than his co-star and Best Actor-winner Brando, and thus should have received the nomination for Best Actor. Pacino denies this, saying in his memoir, *Sonny Boy*, that he was "scared" of his sudden fame and never heard the rumor until much later in his life.

*The Godfather* had five nominations for awards at the [26th British Academy Film Awards](#). The nominees were: Pacino for [Most Promising Newcomer](#), Rota for the [Anthony Asquith Award for Film Music](#), Duvall for [Best Supporting Actor](#), and Brando for [Best Actor](#), the

film's costume designer [Anna Hill Johnstone](#) for [Best Costume Design](#). The only nomination to win was that of Rota.

Award	Category	Nominee	Result
<a href="#">45th Academy Awards</a>	<a href="#">Best Picture</a>	<a href="#">Albert S. Ruddy</a>	Won
	<a href="#">Best Director</a>	<a href="#">Francis Ford Coppola</a>	Nominated
	<a href="#">Best Actor</a>	<a href="#">Marlon Brando</a>  <b>(declined award)</b>	Won
	<a href="#">Best Supporting Actor</a>	<a href="#">James Caan</a>	Nominated
		<a href="#">Robert Duvall</a>	Nominated
		<a href="#">Al Pacino</a>	Nominated
	<a href="#">Best Adapted Screenplay</a>	<a href="#">Mario Puzo</a> and Francis Ford Coppola	Won
	<a href="#">Best Costume Design</a>	<a href="#">Anna Hill Johnstone</a>	Nominated
	<a href="#">Best Film Editing</a>	<a href="#">William Reynolds</a> and <a href="#">Peter Zinner</a>	Nominated
	<a href="#">Best Sound</a>	<a href="#">Bud Grenzbach</a> , <a href="#">Richard Portman</a> and <a href="#">Christopher Newman</a>	Nominated
<a href="#">26th British Academy Film Awards</a>	<a href="#">Best Original Dramatic Score</a>	<a href="#">Nino Rota</a>	Revoked
	<a href="#">Best Actor</a>	Marlon Brando (Also for <a href="#">The Nightcomers</a> )	Nominated
	<a href="#">Best Supporting Actor</a>	Robert Duvall	Nominated
	<a href="#">Most Promising Newcomer to Leading Film Roles</a>	Al Pacino	Nominated
	<a href="#">Best Film Music</a>	Nino Rota	Won
<a href="#">25th Directors Guild of America Awards</a>	<a href="#">Best Costume Design</a>	Anna Hill Johnstone	Nominated
	<a href="#">Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures</a>	Francis Ford Coppola	Won
	<a href="#">Best Motion Picture – Drama</a>		Won

<u><a href="#">30th Golden Globe Awards</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Best Director – Motion Picture</a></u>	Francis Ford Coppola	Won
	<u><a href="#">Best Motion Picture Actor – Drama</a></u>	Marlon Brando	Won
		Al Pacino	Nominated
	<u><a href="#">Best Supporting Actor – Motion Picture</a></u>	James Caan	Nominated
	<u><a href="#">Best Screenplay</a></u>	Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola	Won
<u><a href="#">15th Grammy Awards</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Best Original Score Written for a Motion Picture or TV Special</a></u>	Nino Rota	Won
<u><a href="#">25th Writers Guild of America Awards</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Best Drama Adapted from Another Medium</a></u>	Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola	Won

# The Godfather: Part II

film by Coppola [1974]

**The Godfather: Part II**, American [gangster film](#), released in 1974, that was a sequel and companion piece to the 1972 blockbuster *The Godfather*, adapted from the 1969 novel by [Mario Puzo](#). In the years since its release the film has gained the reputation of being the rare sequel that equals or perhaps surpasses the original.

*The Godfather: Part II* juxtaposes two stories: that of Michael Corleone (played, as in *The Godfather*, by [Al Pacino](#)) in the years after he becomes head of the [Corleone](#) family business and that of his father, Vito Corleone, as a young man (portrayed by [Robert De Niro](#)). In the former storyline, set in the 1950s, Michael has moved the family and his base of operations to [Nevada](#), seeking to expand his influence into [Las Vegas](#) and also into [Havana](#). The other storyline shows Vito first as a child arriving in [New York City](#) in the early 1900s after his family in [Sicily](#) was killed by the local [Mafia](#). As a young man, he is introduced into criminal activity by his friend Clemenza (Bruno Kirby), beginning with thievery. When a neighbourhood crime boss (Gastone Moschin) demands a cut of Vito's profits, however, Vito murders him. Vito gains more power and respect while retaining his devotion to family. In the other narrative, Michael turns down a request from Frankie Pentangeli (Michael V. Gazzo) to approve a hit in New York City, because it would interfere with business with Jewish crime [Kingpin](#) Hyman Roth ([Lee Strasberg](#)). Michael's story then becomes one of betrayal, deceit, and paranoia. He is targeted by assassination attempts and government investigations. His wife ([Diane Keaton](#)) leaves him, his brother Fredo (John Cazale) turns against him, and he ceases to trust the consigliere Tom Hagen ([Robert Duvall](#)). In the end, Michael is left alone, having lost his family and his essential humanity.

The part of the film dealing with Vito Corleone's rise to become the don of his own crime family was adapted from the novel *The Godfather*, but Puzo and cowriter and director [Francis Ford Coppola](#) created the story of Michael's journey into soullessness for

the movie. Most actors from *The Godfather* returned in their original roles, including Talia Shire as Connie Corleone, but Strasberg, a renowned acting teacher, made his film debut in the movie. *The Godfather: Part II* was the first sequel to win an [Academy Award for best picture](#). De Niro, whose [dialogue](#) in the film was almost entirely in the Sicilian [dialect](#), was the second actor to win an [Oscar](#) for playing Don Vito Corleone—and the second who was not present at the ceremony. De Niro was working on another project at the time, and Coppola accepted the award on his behalf.

### Production notes and credits

- Studios: [Paramount Pictures](#) and The Coppola Company
- Director: Francis Ford Coppola
- Writers: Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola
- Music: [Nino Rota](#)
- Cinematographer: Gordon Willis

### Cast

- Al Pacino (Michael Corleone)
- Robert De Niro (Vito Corleone)
- Robert Duvall (Tom Hagen)
- Diane Keaton (Kay Corleone)
- John Cazale (Fredo Corleone)
- Talia Shire (Connie Corleone)
- Lee Strasberg (Hyman Roth)
- Michael V. Gazzo (Frankie Pentangeli)

### Academy Award nominations (\* denotes win)

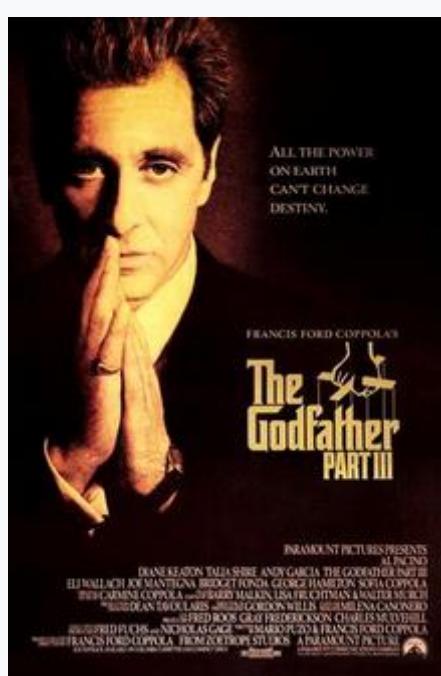
- Picture\*
- Lead actor (Al Pacino)
- Supporting actor (Robert De Niro)\*
- Supporting actor (Michael V. Gazzo)
- Supporting actor (Lee Strasberg)
- Supporting actress (Talia Shire)
- Art direction\*
- Costume design
- Directing\*
- Music\*
- Writing\*



*The Godfather: Part II* American filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola won the Oscar for best director for *The Godfather: Part II* (1974).

## The Godfather Part III

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Godfather\\_Part\\_III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Godfather_Part_III)



Theatrical release poster

Directed by

[Francis Ford Coppola](#)

Written by

- [Mario Puzo](#)
- Francis Ford Coppola

Produced by

Francis Ford Coppola

Starring

- [Al Pacino](#)
- [Diane Keaton](#)
- [Talia Shire](#)
- [Andy García](#)
- [Eli Wallach](#)
- [Joe Mantegna](#)
- [Bridget Fonda](#)
- [George Hamilton](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Sofia Coppola</a></li> </ul>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<a href="#">Gordon Willis</a>
<b>Edited by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Barry Malkin</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lisa Fruchtman</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Walter Murch</a></li> </ul>
<b>Music by</b>	<a href="#">Carmine Coppola</a>
<b>Production companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Paramount Pictures</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Zoetrope Studios</a></li> </ul>
<b>Distributed by</b>	Paramount Pictures
<b>Release dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• December 20, 1990 (Beverly Hills)</li> <li>• December 25, 1990 (United States)</li> </ul>
<b>Running time</b>	162 minutes <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$54 million <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Box office</b>	\$136.9 million <sup>[2]</sup>

**The Godfather Part III** is a 1990 American [epic crime film](#) produced and directed by [Francis Ford Coppola](#) from the screenplay co-written with [Mario Puzo](#). The film stars [Al Pacino](#), [Diane Keaton](#), [Talia Shire](#), [Andy García](#), [Eli Wallach](#), [Joe Mantegna](#), [Bridget Fonda](#), [George Hamilton](#) and [Sofia Coppola](#). It is the third and final installment in [The Godfather trilogy](#). A sequel to [The Godfather](#) (1972) and [The Godfather Part II](#) (1974), it concludes the fictional story of [Michael Corleone](#), the patriarch of the [Corleone family](#) who attempts to legitimize his criminal empire. The film also includes fictionalized accounts of two real-life events: the 1978 death of [Pope John Paul I](#) and the [Papal banking scandal](#) of 1981–1982, both linked to Michael Corleone's business affairs.

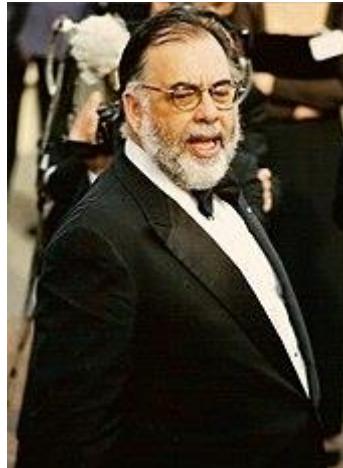
Although Coppola initially refused to return for a third film, he eventually signed to direct and write *Part III*. In his [audio commentary](#) for *Part II*, Coppola stated that only a dire financial situation, caused by the failure of his 1982 musical fantasy [One from the Heart](#), compelled him to take up [Paramount's](#) long-standing offer to make a third installment. Coppola and Puzo wanted the title to be *The Death of Michael Corleone*, for they felt that the first two films had told the complete Corleone saga, so *Part III* would serve as the [epilogue](#), but Paramount Pictures thought that that title was unacceptable.

[Winona Ryder](#) was initially cast in the role of Michael Corleone's daughter Mary, but eventually left production due to other commitments and nervous exhaustion. The role was ultimately given to Coppola's daughter Sofia, a decision that garnered much criticism and accusations of [nepotism](#). [Principal photography](#) took place from late 1989 to early 1990, with filming locations in both Italy and the United States.

*The Godfather Part III* premiered in [Beverly Hills](#) on December 20, 1990, and was widely released in the United States on [Christmas Day](#). The film received generally positive reviews, although it was considered inferior to the previous films by some audiences. Critics praised Pacino's and García's performances, cinematography, editing, production design and Coppola's direction, but criticized the plot, the casting and the performance of Sofia Coppola. It grossed \$136.8 million worldwide, and garnered seven

nominations at the [63rd Academy Awards](#), including [Best Picture](#), [Best Director](#) and [Best Supporting Actor](#) (Garcia). It also received seven nominations at the [48th Golden Globe Awards](#), including [Best Motion Picture – Drama](#) and [Best Actor – Motion Picture Drama](#) (Pacino).

In December 2020, a [recut](#) version of the film, titled ***The Godfather Coda: The Death of Michael Corleone***, was released to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the original version.



Francis Ford Coppola (pictured in 1996), director of the film



Sofia Coppola in 2013; her performance in the film was panned by critics.

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# Legacy

That will be Brando's legacy whether he likes it or not—the stunning actor who embodied a poetry of anxiety that touched the deepest dynamics of his time and place.

—Jack Kroll in 1994

Brando was one of the most respected actors of the post-war era. He is listed by the [American Film Institute](#) as the fourth greatest male star whose screen debut occurred before or during 1950 (it occurred in 1950). He earned respect among critics for his memorable performances and charismatic screen presence. He helped popularize 'method acting'. He is regarded as one of the greatest cinema actors of the 20th century. Furthermore, he was one of only six actors named in 1999 by [Time](#) magazine in its list of the [100 Most Important People of the Century](#). In this list, *Time* also designated Brando as the "Actor of the Century".

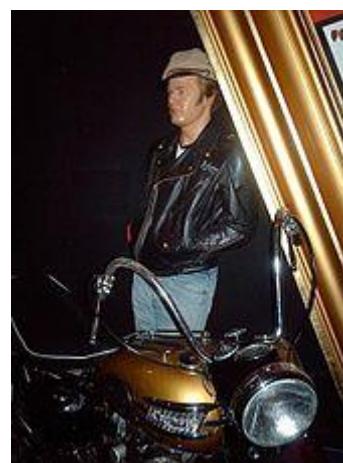


*Encyclopædia Britannica* describes him as "the most celebrated of the method actors, and his slurred, mumbling delivery marked his rejection of classical dramatic training. His true and passionate performances proved him one of the greatest actors of his generation." It also notes the apparent paradox of his talent: "He is regarded as the most influential actor of his generation, yet his open disdain for the acting profession ... often manifested itself in the form of questionable choices and uninspired performances. Nevertheless, he remains a riveting screen presence with a vast emotional range and an endless array of compulsively watchable idiosyncrasies."<sup>[191]</sup>

### Cultural influence

He was our angry young man—the delinquent, the tough, the rebel—who stood at the center of our common experience.

—Pauline Kael



Madame Tussauds waxwork exhibit of Brando in *The Wild One* albeit with a later 1957/58 model Triumph Thunderbird.

Marlon Brando is a cultural icon with enduring popularity. His rise to national attention in the 1950s had a profound effect on American culture. According to film critic Pauline Kael, "Brando represented a reaction against the post-war mania for security. As a protagonist, the Brando of the early fifties had no code, only his instincts. He was a development from the gangster leader and the outlaw. He was antisocial because he knew society was crap; he was a hero to youth because he was strong enough not to take the crap ... Brando represented a contemporary version of the free American ... Brando is still the most exciting American actor on the screen."

Sociologist Suzanne McDonald-Walker states: "Marlon Brando, sporting leather jacket, jeans, and moody glare, became a cultural icon summing up 'the road' in all its maverick glory." His portrayal of the gang leader Johnny Strabler in *The Wild One* has become an enduring image, used both as a symbol of rebelliousness and a fashion accessory that includes a Perfecto style motorcycle jacket, a tilted cap, jeans and sunglasses. Johnny's haircut inspired a craze for sideburns, followed by James Dean and Elvis Presley, among others. Dean copied Brando's acting style extensively and Presley used Brando's image as a model for his role in *Jailhouse Rock*. The "I coulda been a contender" scene from *On the Waterfront*, according to the author of *Brooklyn Boomer*, Martin H. Levinson, is "one of the most famous scenes in motion picture history, and the line itself has become part of America's cultural lexicon." An example of the endurance of Brando's popular "Wild One" image was the 2009 release of replicas of the leather jacket worn by Brando's Johnny Strabler character. The jackets were marketed by Triumph, the manufacturer of

the [Triumph Thunderbird](#) motorcycles featured in *The Wild One*, and were officially licensed by Brando's estate.

Brando was also considered a male [sex symbol](#). [Linda Williams](#) writes: "Marlon Brando [was] the quintessential American male sex symbol of the late fifties and early sixties". Brando was an early [lesbian icon](#) who, along with [James Dean](#), influenced the [butch](#) look and self-image in the 1950s and after.

Brando has also been immortalized in music; most notably, he was mentioned in the lyrics of "[It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City](#)" by [Bruce Springsteen](#), in which one of the opening lines read "I could walk like Brando right in to the sun", and in Neil Young's "[Pocahontas](#)" as a tribute to his lifetime support of Native Americans and in which he is depicted sitting by a fire with Neil and Pocahontas. He was also mentioned in "[Vogue](#)" by [Madonna](#), "[Is This What You Wanted](#)" by [Leonard Cohen](#) on the album [New Skin for the Old Ceremony](#), "[Eyeless](#)" by [Slipknot](#) on their [self-titled album](#), and most recently in the song simply titled "[Marlon Brando](#)" off the Australian singer [Alex Cameron's](#) 2017 album [Forced Witness](#). [Bob Dylan's](#) 2020 song "[My Own Version of You](#)" references one of his most famous performances in the line, "I'll take the [Scarface Pacino](#) and the [Godfather](#) Brando / Mix 'em up in a tank and get a robot commando".

Brando is also visible on the cover of [the Beatles'](#) 1967 album [Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band](#), among [a tableau of celebrities and historical figures](#).

Brando's films, along with those of [James Dean](#), caused [Honda](#) to come forward with its "You Meet the Nicest People on a Honda" ads, to curb the negative association motorcycles had gotten with rebels and outlaws.

## Views on acting

In his autobiography [\*\*Songs My Mother Taught Me\*\*](#), Brando observed:

"I've always thought that one benefit of acting is that it gives actors a chance to express feelings that they are normally unable to vent in real life. Intense emotions buried inside you can come smoking out the back of your head, and I suppose in terms of psychodrama this can be helpful. In hindsight, I guess my emotional insecurity as a child—the frustrations of not being allowed to be who I was, of wanting love and not being able to get it, of realizing that I was of no value—may have helped me as an actor, at least in a small way. It probably gave me a certain intensity that most people don't have."

He also confessed that, while having great admiration for the theater, he did not return to it after his initial success primarily because the work left him drained emotionally:

"What I remember most about *A Streetcar Named Desire* was the emotional grind of acting in it six nights and two afternoons. Try to imagine what it was like walking on stage at 8:30 every night having to yell, scream, cry, break dishes, kick the furniture, punch the walls and experience the same intense, wrenching emotions night after night, trying each time to evoke in audiences the same emotions I felt. It was exhausting."



Brando repeatedly credited Stella Adler and her understanding of the [Stanislavski acting technique](#) for bringing realism to American cinema, but also added:

This school of acting served the American theater and motion pictures well, but it was restricting. The American theater has never been able to present [Shakespeare](#) or classical drama of any kind satisfactorily. We simply do not have the style, the regard for the language or the cultural disposition ... You cannot mumble in Shakespeare. You cannot improvise, and you are required to adhere strictly to the text. The English theater has a sense of language that we do not recognize ... In the United States the English language has developed almost into a patois.

In the 2015 documentary [Listen to Me Marlon](#), Brando shared his thoughts on playing a death scene, stating, "That's a tough scene to play. You have to make 'em believe that you are dying ... Try to think of the most intimate moment you've ever had in your life." His favorite actors were [Spencer Tracy](#), [John Barrymore](#), [Fredric March](#), [James Cagney](#) and [Paul Muni](#). He also showed admiration for [Sean Penn](#), [Jack Nicholson](#), [Johnny Depp](#) and [Daniel Day-Lewis](#).



## Marlon Brando

### TEN Essential Films

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/lists/marlon-brando-10-essential-films>

As his screen debut, *The Men*,  
arrives on Blu-ray, we go 10 rounds  
with the career of acting titan

Marlon Brando –  
from *On the Waterfront* to *The Godfather*.





The most impactful actor in the history of American cinema? An overrated mumbler? A genius? A lazy, belligerent egotist? From the moment Marlon Brando first appeared on the big screen, in Fred Zinneman's *The Men* (1950) - released this month on BFI Blu-ray - he demanded attention and divided opinion.

Brando was more than capable of phoning it in, particularly in the closing stretch of his half century in front of the camera, but few could match him at his peak. As the best-known practitioner of the '**Method**' technique, there was no star more responsible for pulling the trajectory of Hollywood acting away from the genteel elocution of the 1930s and 40s towards something that felt more authentically, imperfectly human. Though there was certainly a Brando delivery (**often and humorously imitated**), there was never really a stock Brando character - he could and would play anything, from lofty historical figures to leather-clad young punks, good-hearted heroes to psychopathic villains.

Legend may have calcified him into something of a caricature, but even a cursory skim through the highlights of his filmography reveals an actor thrillingly unpredictable and determinedly alive. Here are 10 of the finest performances from a movie career like no other.

## A Streetcar Named Desire (1951)

Director: Elia Kazan





Reprising his role from the hit Broadway production (along with the majority of the cast, and director Elia Kazan), Brando's unforgettable turn as the brutish Stanley Kowalski – his unvarnished line deliveries; his sweaty, almost feral sexuality; the promise of violence in his ravenous gaze – truly established the actor as a new cinematic phenomenon.

The polarity of difference in the styles of Brando and classically-trained lead Vivien Leigh adds electricity to the already charged confrontations between Stanley and his faded southern belle sister-in-law. Both would garner widespread and extravagant praise for their performances, as well as Academy Award nominations (Leigh won best actress).

## Julius Caesar (1953)

Director: Joseph L. Mankiewicz



Although Julius Caesar is generally more concerned with the ruler's conflicted killer, Brutus (James Mason), than Brando's stalwart Mark Antony, this classic Shakespeare adaptation gave the nascent icon the valuable chance to prove he could go toe to toe with acting greats like Mason and John Gielgud on material that seemed far more suited to their theatrical skillsets.

Despite a comparative lack of screen time, his big moment – Mark Antony's funeral oration for Caesar – is still dazzling for its power, magnetism and nuance; a surprisingly perfect marriage of actor and material. Brando had never performed Shakespeare before, and would never again, but Julius Caesar was enough to show he was more than capable.



# On the Waterfront (1954)

Director: Elia Kazan



In his third and final collaboration with Elia Kazan, Brando was Terry Malloy, a longshoreman trapped between his perilous embroilment in a corrupt union and his growing affection for Edie Doyle (Eva Marie Saint) – the sister of a man he unwittingly helped that union to kill.

Perhaps the most textured performance of his whole filmography, Brando's Terry is wrecked with self-loathing but brimming with charm; seething with violence, yet tender and achingly fragile. His iconic "I coulda been a contender..." speech (which he helped to write), was not only a highlight of his career but of the history of screen acting.

# The Fugitive Kind (1960)

Director: Sidney Lumet



While it never garnered the laudatory reception of his other Tennessee Williams movie, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Brando is just as compelling – if in a markedly different way – in *The Fugitive Kind*.

As soft-spoken drifter Valentine 'Snakeskin' Xavier – who becomes involved with both the unhappy wife (Anna Magnani) of an ailing abuser, and the town's resident alcoholic (Joanne Woodward) – he's enigmatic and seductive; the gentle counterpoint to the macho roughness that dominates the lives of the townswomen. Though their working partnership was fractious, Brando and Magnani are mesmerising together, bringing desperate passion to the unconventional relationship at the film's centre.

# One-Eyed Jacks (1961)

Director: Marlon Brando



In his only directorial outing, Brando cast himself as Kid Rio, a bank robber betrayed by his partner (Karl Malden) and left to spend five years in prison, who's determined to enact his revenge.

One-Eyed Jacks marked the third time Brando worked with good friend Malden, and their bristling chemistry helps power the movie through its lengthy runtime. As close partners turned deadly enemies, the two men proffer shark smiles while wielding knives behind their wary backs, creating a riveting mounting tension. The romantic aspects of the film are less successful, but Brando's confrontations with Malden are consistently thrilling.

## Mutiny on the Bounty (1962)

Director: Lewis Milestone



Despite being widely considered the first film where his offscreen behaviour went too far off the rails, and despite an accent that could kindly be described as 'dubious', Brando's performance in *Mutiny on the Bounty* is buoyant and hugely entertaining.

Playing Fletcher Christian, the foppish naval officer who would spearhead the mutiny against the sadistic Captain Bligh (Trevor Howard), Brando is both deliciously insouciant and convincingly conflicted, making the slow moral growth of his character as compelling a journey as the titular ship's. Contemporary audiences disagreed, however, and the film marked the start of a decade-long run of critical and commercial failures for Brando.

## The Chase (1966)

Director: Arthur Penn



Robert Redford's unfairly convicted prison escapee finds himself the centre of a terrifying manhunt, and Brando's sympathetic sheriff is the sole person standing between him and the baying mob in Arthur Penn's hugely underrated *The Chase*.

While Sheriff Calder is one of the most uncomplicatedly decent characters of Brando's filmography, his bone-deep exhaustion with the terrible people he's taken an oath to serve and protect lends his central turn a vivid, vulnerable complexity. An unusual shooting technique suggested by Brando – which saw real but slowly-landed punches sped up to look as if they're causing genuine damage – makes the mob's eventual beating of Calder still difficult to watch today.

## Reflections in a Golden Eye (1967)

Director: John Huston



In this Carson McCullers adaptation, Brando plays an army major contending with his repressed homosexuality, his philandering wife (Elizabeth Taylor) and an attraction to a young private (Robert Forster, in his movie debut), on a southern military base during peace time.

Reflections in a Golden Eye is a film filled with grandiose performances and outrageous actions (at one point, Taylor whips Brando repeatedly across the face with a riding crop). In contrast, Brando makes the major's repression internal to the point of physical pain, palpably folding in on himself until all his bottled-up emotions are unleashed, to tragic consequences.

## The Godfather (1972)

Director: Francis Ford Coppola



After a lengthy stretch of lead turns in films that underperformed at the box office, The Godfather reignited Brando's flailing stardom (although persuading both the actor to take the role and the studio to approve him proved a daunting challenge). It earned him his second – notorious – Academy Award win.

He was just 47 at the time of shooting, but makeup artist Dick Smith helped turn Brando into a convincing septuagenarian. Playing the mob patriarch Don Corleone with such magnetic gravitas would truly usher in the second stage of Brando's career, when he'd be viewed more as a bona fide living legend than a working actor.

## Apocalypse Now (1979)

Director: Francis Ford Coppola



By the time of *Apocalypse Now*, Brando the actor had long been cannibalised by Brando the legend, with lurid tales of his belligerent behind-the-scenes hijinks often overwhelming the work he was doing on screen.

All this acted in Brando's favour when it came to embodying Colonel Kurtz, however; his notorious off-screen shenanigans lending tremendous heft to his already formidable portrayal of the larger-than-life character. Though he would continue to make sporadic film appearances of variable quality all the way up until 2001, the operatic grandeur of *Apocalypse Now* feels like the most fitting swansong for a career of peerless magnitude.

# All 40 Marlon Brando Film Performances Ranked in Honor of His 100th Birthday

<https://www.indiewire.com/gallery/best-marlon-brando-movies-ranked/>

On what would be his 100th birthday, Marlon Brando remains synonymous not with acting, but great acting — even if this ranked list of all his performances represents what may be the most wildly uneven filmography for any talent of his calibre. But that's the power of Brando: A handful of his performances are so great and influential they shook up the art of acting forever. Even among his lesser performances, there's compelling work deserving of rediscovery.

In order to best exemplify what made him such a singular onscreen presence, we ranked all 39 of his films (and one TV appearance), reflecting a spectrum as wide as the man's broad shoulders. Based on the quality of Brando's performances rather than the overall films themselves, there are some placements that may surprise you; for example, as great as Brando is in "The Godfather," it's still just the fourth-best performance in the film after Pacino, Duvall, and Caan — its ranking on our list reflects that.



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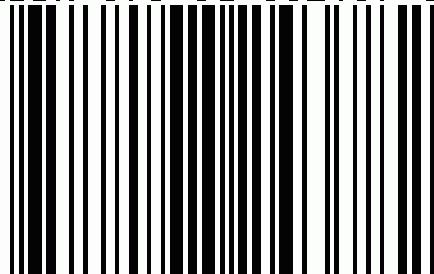
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ISBN 978-81-932437-8-2



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